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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Vice Premier of the State Council,
People's Republic of China
Chi'iao Kuan-hua, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Amb. Huang Chen, Chief of the PRC Liaison Office,
Washington, D. C.
Wang Hai-jung, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs
T'ang Wen-sheng, Deputy Director, Department of
American and Oceanic Affairs
Lien Cheng-pao, (Notetaker).

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Amb. George Bush, Chief of the U. S. Liaison Office,
Peking
Winston Lord, Director, Policy Planning Staff
Bonnie Andrews, Secretary's Office (Notetaker)

DATE AND TIME:

Wednesday, November 27, 1974
9:45 - 11:32 a.m.

PLACE:

Guest House #18
Peking

SUBJECT:

President's Visit; Nuclear War: SALT;
Yugoslavia.

Kissinger: When the Foreign Minister spoke at the United Nations,
his most violent attacks were not understood by most Americans.

Teng: You mean including the interpreters?

Kissinger: Oh no, they understood.

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CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
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Teng: On yes. And before I forget, the Marshall [Yeh Chien-ying] asked yesterday evening that I send greetings to the Doctor and his wife.

Kissinger: I appreciate that very much; he is an old friend.

Teng: And he also asked me to say that because of his busy schedule, he will not be able to meet with you. I think he has met you several times.

Kissinger: I understand. He greeted me on my first visit.

Teng: Actually, on our side, he is the Minister of National Defense and Chief of the General Staff. And that is why he is very happy that our government has extended the invitation to your Secretary of Defense.

Kissinger: Yes. I wondered if that meant that he would speak only to the Secretary of Defense and not to the Secretary of State.

Teng: I don't think it means that. It means that the U.S. Secretary of Defense is invited to Peking and in that event I don't think it would be very easy for people to say that our relations have become even more cold.

Kissinger: That's true. Let me make a few observations if I may. First, we agree on the desirability of demonstrating not only that our relations have not become colder, but in fact our relations are becoming warmer. We think that is in the interest of both of our countries. And we are prepared to do this not only symbolically, but substantively.

Now, in the security field, I had some discussions with the Prime Minister on my last evening here last time and I want you to know that those principles we still maintain.

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Now, about the invitation of the Secretary of Defense. This presents us with a problem. The Soviet leaders have repeatedly invited our Secretary of Defense to Moscow and have asked for a reciprocal exchange of visits between our Secretary of Defense and their Minister of Defense. And we have consistently refused. And then they proposed meetings of military commanders in Europe, and we have turned that down too. So if we begin using our Secretary of Defense for diplomatic travels, he will begin going to places that I don't believe are desirable.

But we have two possibilities. First, we would approve a visit by any other Cabinet member to Peking. And secondly, I believe also that we could consider an invitation to President Ford if that were considered desirable. So it is not a lack of interest in demonstrating a close relationship.

Teng: So, as the Doctor just now mentioned this, if President Ford desires a possibility to come to China, we would welcome him.

Kissinger: I suppose we could envisage it for the second half of next year. Or, what are your ideas?

Teng: Anytime would be all right for us.

Kissinger: We don't have to fix an exact date. When I was here the first time, we did not fix a date -- only a certain time period.

Teng: It can be decided upon on a different time.

Kissinger: Let us agree then in 1975.

Teng: I think that is all right.

Kissinger: And I think that would be an important event.

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Teng: So then we can later on go into specific dates, because we don't have to settle now.

Kissinger: We don't have to settle now. What is your idea? Should we announce the invitation and acceptance at the end of my visit?

Teng: What would you think?

Kissinger: I think it's a good idea. We should have a communique at the end of my visit -- which we would perhaps publish Saturday or Sunday -- in which we should announce this, yes.

Teng: So then we will consider the announcement and communique and discuss it with you later.

Kissinger: I think there is an advantage to relating it to my visit here. When it should be published -- Saturday or Monday -- we are open-minded. Or later even.

Teng: So we will leave it to the Foreign Minister to work out the wording of the announcement with you.

Kissinger: Must I work it out with him? We spent a week one time. He is a very tough negotiator. It will be a great pleasure.

Teng: You are both philosophers.

Ch'iao: But we two must quarrel each time we meet because we belong to two different schools of philosophy.

Kissinger: That is true. But they are related.

Ch'iao: Both linked and related.

Kissinger: Like our relationship.

Teng: But you don't have to go into such length at these meetings. Just have some more mao tai. [Laughter]

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Kissinger: OK. The Foreign Minister and I will discuss what should be said in the communique.

Teng: It should be like a press communique.

Ch'iao: Brief; not long, taking two weeks.

Kissinger: Yes, one page. Not like the Shanghai Communique.

Teng: I don't think we have anything else very much now to say.

Kissinger: You mean in the communique. We could reaffirm a few general principles and then make the basic announcement.

Teng: I'll leave it to you to quarrel about.

Kissinger: We could do it in German!

Teng: They say that is a very difficult language to read.

Kissinger: Yes. In German you know a man is on the stairs. But it may take two pages to know if he is going up or down. [Laughter]

Teng: And about the invitation to the Secretary of Defense. We request that your government continue to consider the invitation.

Kissinger: Maybe after the President visits we can arrange this. But we are prepared to do similar things in that area. If you are concerned about concrete things, we are prepared to do them.

Teng: Actually our invitation to your Secretary of Defense isn't mainly to discuss any specific issues. The meaning is in the invitation itself.

Kissinger: We understand.

Teng: As for the discussions of problems, it is probably still up to the Doctor and the President.

Kissinger: The last time we were here, we had to arrange a whole set of negotiations of extreme delicacy -- that will not be necessary this time --

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between your Foreign Minister and ours. We will consider the invitation to our Secretary of Defense and if we can both determine the right moment to do it, we will certainly do it. We will be glad if there is any other Cabinet member you think would be desirable to have here. We can arrange it very quickly. But it is entirely up to you.

Teng: So this request is still for the consideration of your government.

Kissinger: Yes, and we will keep it between your Ambassador and me. That is on the assumption that he comes back soon.

Now, I wanted to tell you one other thing that I have already mentioned to your Ambassador for your information: When I was in Moscow in October, Brezhnev made a proposal for a new treaty to us and repeated it in more detail to President Ford in Vladivostok. And it is a rather novel and ingenious proposition. The proposal is as follows: The U.S. and Soviet Union should make a treaty with each other in which they will defend each other against any attack by any other country or they will defend each other's allies against nuclear attack from any other country.

[Meeting temporarily interrupted by Chinese girl opening outer door.]

Kissinger: I have people in the other room but they will join us for the later discussion.

Translator: They must be able to hear me because of my loud voice.

Kissinger: We asked for a practical explanation of how this would operate. The practical explanation is that in any use of nuclear weapons, regardless of who initiates it, in a war between the Soviet Union and another country or between the U.S. and another country, or between an ally of each, then the U.S. and Soviet Union would have to help each other, and if physical help is not possible, then they would have to observe benevolent neutrality.

We think it has two, well three, general purposes. The first is to undermine NATO, because it would specifically oblige us to cooperate with the Soviet Union against our allies if nuclear weapons were involved. Secondly, it would force those Arabs who are afraid of nuclear weapons being used by Israel into an alliance relationship with the Soviet Union.

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And third, I think, China. Those seemed to us the three purposes, together with the general impression of condominium.

We did not accept a serious discussion of this proposal. Nor will we.

Ch'iao: Actually your treaty on preventing nuclear war could be interpreted in this way also..

Kissinger: No, absolutely not.

Teng: Because your consultations know no bounds.

Kissinger: First of all, that treaty has never been invoked. We have used that treaty and intend to use it to get a legal basis for resistance in areas that are not covered by treaty obligations. The only time that treaty has been used was by the U.S. during the October alert.

Secondly, that treaty deliberately says that to prevent nuclear war, one has to avoid conventional war. And, therefore, by the reverse, to resort to conventional war involves the danger of retaliation by nuclear war. The new Soviet proposal separates nuclear war. It makes no distinction about who uses the weapons first, and it is directed at a kind of nuclear condominium.

In the October alert, we warned the Soviet Union that if they used force in the Middle East it would be in violation of Article 2 of the Treaty on Prevention of Nuclear War, which says that the use of conventional weapons implies the risk of nuclear weapons, and we used it as a warning to the Soviet Union.

But I agree with the Foreign Minister that the Soviet intention in their draft to us on the Treaty to Prevent Nuclear War was to achieve what they are now proposing in this new treaty.

Teng: Their goals and purposes have been constant all along.

Kissinger: And their diplomacy clumsy and obvious.

Teng: But their purpose is also very clear. And their goals are clear. And we think their purposes can only be these: First of all, to utilize the signing of such an agreement with you to develop their own nuclear weapons

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to standards either equivalent to yours or surpassing yours. And the reason they are expressing such interest in signing such an agreement naturally shows that they have tasted a sweet taste out of such agreements. If I recall things correctly, you signed your first treaty pertaining to nuclear matters in July 1963. At that time I was in Moscow carrying on negotiations between our two parties, and on the very day I was leaving you signed that treaty.

Kissinger: We were not informed about all your movements at the time.
[Laughter]

Teng: And it must be said that at that time the level of Soviet weapons were lagging a considerable distance behind yours. But in the eleven years since, I must say they have been able to reach a level about the same as yours.

Kissinger: That is not exactly correct, and I will explain that to you. It is inevitable that a large industrial power will increase the numbers of its nuclear weapons. And it is the characteristic of nuclear weapons because of their destructiveness that beyond a certain point superiority is not as effective as in conventional weapons.

But in numbers, diversity, accuracy and flexibility, our nuclear weapons will be considerably superior to the Soviet Union for the whole period of the arrangement which we signed in Vladivostok. And I will explain that to you if you want, or some other time while I am here. That is true both in numbers and characteristics.

Ch'iao: I would like to add a few words if possible. We thank the Doctor for telling us of Soviet intentions, but as we have said many times, we do not attach such great importance to such treaties. We still have a treaty with the Soviet Union that has not been outdated yet and now they have now proposed to us a new treaty for mutual non-aggression. Of course, how we will deal with this new treaty will have to be seen. But on the whole, we do not attach such great importance to such matters. And the decisive fact is not any treaty but a policy, the principles and the lines.

Teng: But I haven't finished now. I have only mentioned the first goal of the Soviet Union. The second is, as Dr. Kissinger mentioned, to try to divide the U.S. from its allies, which you have discovered or perceived. But it seems that although you have revealed this point, they will never give up this goal, whether in the past, present or future. And the third purpose will be to maintain the monopolistic status of your two countries in the field of nuclear weapons.

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And they will try to use this point not only to compare with your country but also intimidate countries with only a few nuclear weapons and thus reach their aim of hegemony.

So our overall view of such treaties is that we attach importance to their political significance, and as always our attitude toward such matters is that we believe they are not of much consequence, and we are not bound by any such treaty or agreement. And as the Doctor has repeated many times, your aim is not to bind others either.

Kissinger: In every meeting with the Soviet Union in discussing proposals directed against China such as nuclear testing and nuclear proliferation, we have always avoided formulations whose purpose is directed against third countries.

Teng: But even if they were so, even if they succeeded, what role would those treaties play? They would not be able to play much of a role. And if they signed such agreements, they would still be waving their baton, and if they don't sign they would still have nuclear weapons. As for our nuclear weapons, as Chairman Mao says, they are only so much [gesturing with fingers].

Kissinger: We have never discussed nuclear weapons with you from our side.

Teng: That is right.

Kissinger: We inform you of Soviet overtures not because you should pay attention but because if they should ever tell you, you will know what is happening. And also we have an understanding with you not to do anything with the Soviet Union without informing you. And so we inform you of things with them whether you attach significance to them or not. And we are not asking you to do anything about it.

There is one other matter that came up in Vladivostok that I wanted to mention to you. The Soviet proposed to us to have consultations on Japanese-Chinese relations and to prevent them from becoming too close. We have refused this, and we have told the Japanese in a general way about this, and have told the Japanese about our refusal.

Teng: So from this too we can see the aims of the Soviet Union. You know, their Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko, has a characteristic of which we were told by Khrushchev in 1957 when Chairman Mao went to Moscow.

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Khrushchev introduced Gromyko to us, and he told us that Gromyko had a lot of things in his pocket. And Khrushchev told us that this fellow Gromyko could produce this formula today, and tomorrow, and he has so many things he can produce that that is his major trait -- that was Khrushchev's introduction of Gromyko. And it seems that Brezhnev has learned that trait from Gromyko and has a lot of things in his pocket too.

As for our dealings with the Soviet Union, we do not rely on our nuclear weapons. And we don't have very much skill other than digging tunnels and having rifles. As for your signing such agreements, we do not attach such great significance to them. Maybe we won't even comment.

Kissinger: That is entirely up to you. The agreements we sign have nothing to do with China except the one on preventing nuclear war which to us gives us legal possibilities. But the agreement, or the tentative one in Vladivostok, we consider very favorable in the overall strategic balance. It is up to you if you comment or not. It has nothing to do with the People's Republic of China.

Teng: I would like to raise a question. We have heard the Doctor say that the recent meeting and the recent signing of such an agreement was a great breakthrough. Was it really so? To be more specific -- how reliable can it be -- how reliable are the prospects for ten years of detente and a cease of competition in the military field?

Kissinger: First of all, you have to understand that we have to fight on many fronts. And our domestic strategy is to isolate our left, if that is a proper thing to say in the People's Republic.

Teng: We like those on the right!

Kissinger: The ones on the right have no choice but to be with us anyway. The ones on the right are no problem with us.

Teng: Isn't Mr. Heath of Great Britain a well-known man on the right?

Kissinger: Oh, yes.

Teng: And wasn't Mr. Adenauer of your former father-land a well-known man of the right? And in France, De Gaulle, Pompidou and Giscard, Tanaka, and Ohira are famous men on the right. We like this kind, comparatively speaking.

Kissinger: We send our leftists to Peking.

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Bush: I don't think I understand that.

Kissinger: The Ambassador is a left-wing Republican. No, he is here because he has our total confidence.

But it is important in the U.S. to isolate and paralyze those who would undermine our defense program and who generally conduct what I consider a stupid policy. And we can do this by pursuing policies which adopt their rhetoric.

And to answer your question, I do not believe that this guarantees ten years of detente -- not for one minute. But I do believe that if detente breaks down, or when it does, we will be better able to mobilize our public opinion having made every effort to preserve peace rather than being accused of having provoked them.

Teng: On our side we don't believe it is possible to reach detente -- still less maintain ten years of detente. And we don't think there is any agreement that can bind the hands of Russia.

Kissinger: No, but there is no way they can violate this agreement without our knowing it. I don't think it was a very intelligent agreement for them. They have two choices: they can either respect the agreement, in which case we preserve a certain strategic advantage, or they can violate the agreement, in which case we have the psychological and political possibility of massive breakout ourselves, which we would not have otherwise for domestic reasons.

Teng: As we see it, it is still necessary to have vigilance.

Kissinger: There is no doubt about that for us.

Teng: That would be good.

Kissinger: I once studied the foreign policy of Metternich, and he said the trick to dealing with Napoleon was to seem to be a fool without being one. There is no question -- in terms of our domestic situation, it is, strangely enough easier to get Congress to give funds for limits in agreements than to get funds for the same amounts without an agreement. [To Bush:] Do you think so, George?

Bush: Yes, I do.

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Teng: There is something else I would like to ask about your SALT agreement. Does it mean strategic arms? Does it apply only to nuclear arms?

Kissinger: Yes, and only those with an intercontinental range.

Teng: That means that only those strategic weapons are included, not others.

Kissinger: According to the definitions of the agreement.

Teng: But outside of that agreement, what is meant by strategic weapons? For example, conventional weapons have been considered strategic?

Kissinger: No.

Teng: Then we differ a bit here. Because here is the question of whether a future war would be a nuclear war.

Kissinger: What do you think?

Teng: We don't think so necessarily.

Kissinger: I agree. But I would like to say, as I said to the Chairman and Prime Minister, we would consider any sign of expansion of the Soviet sphere -- either to the West or East, whether countries were covered by treaty or not, as a threat to our long-term security. It has nothing to do with our affection for the countries covered but strategic reality. Secondly, we don't care if that expansion comes with conventional or nuclear weapons.

Teng: You know there is a story, after Khrushchev came to Peking. He came to Peking in 1954, and he gave us this reasoning: During that visit, aside from boasting of his corn planting, he also boasted about the uselessness of naval vessels. He said that in the missile era naval vessels were nothing other than moving targets and they would be finished off at once. And the Soviet Union actually ceased to build their Navy for two or three years. But they very quickly rectified that. And since then, while energetically developing their nuclear weapons, they are at the same time continuing to build their conventional weapons and their navy also.

Kissinger: That is true, but we don't think that they have a strong navy.

Teng: But they have increased their numbers.

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Kissinger: They have increased their numbers, but according to our observations -- we may be wrong -- in each Middle East crisis their navy maneuvered with very great clumsiness and we judge they would be a very easy target. We thought their panicky behavior in each crisis suggested that this is true.

Teng: But no matter what, in the past the Soviet Union had no naval forces in the Mediterranean or Indian Oceans and their activities were confined very close to their Pacific shores. But now they go everywhere, even Latin America. During the subcontinent crisis their vessels moved with greater speed than yours.

Kissinger: They are after ours.

Chiao: But anyway, that time your naval vessels moved too slowly.

Kissinger: Be that as it may, but in conventional land strength, we do not underestimate the Soviet Union. They are very strong in conventional land strength. In naval strength they are absolutely no match for us. We have hysterical admirals who, when they want money, say that no matter what country we are in war against, including Switzerland, that we are going to lose. But in reality, the only way the Soviet Union could hurt our fleet in the Mediterranean is with their land-based aircraft. And if they did that, that would be a general nuclear war. But if it is a naval battle, our carriers can strike theirs with so much greater distance and force, that there is absolutely no possibility for them to survive.

Teng: But from our discussions with some Europeans, they seem much more worried than you -- not just on naval forces but on the whole question of conventional forces.

Kissinger: On the question of conventional forces, everyone has reason to worry. On the question of naval forces, I believe we are far superior.

Teng: But the Soviet Union develops itself with greater speed. If the Soviet Union launches a war, it might not be a nuclear war; it might quite possibly be a conventional war. Under this condition, conventional weapons should not be neglected.

Kissinger: I completely agree. That is a problem the western countries do have, not in naval forces but ground conventional forces. But you will notice that we have increased the number of our divisions recently. But it is a problem. There is no question.

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Teng: But your increase is proportionately much smaller than the Soviet Union.

Kissinger: That is true. But I think it would be extremely dangerous for the Soviet Union. First of all, in Europe, the Soviet Union could not achieve a decisive victory without a very large battle and in those circumstances we would use nuclear weapons.

Teng: But under those conditions, where the Soviet Union has the same destructive strength as you, would it be easy for you to make up your minds?

Kissinger: The Soviet Union does not have the same destructive force as we.

Teng: Not even enough strength for a first strike?

Kissinger: No. Let me explain the composition of the forces to you because there is so much nonsense written in the U.S. by people with specific purposes in mind that there is a very misleading impression created.

We have 1,054 land-based missiles. 656 sea-based, on submarines. 435 B-52 bombers. 300 F-111 bombers which are never counted for some reason. This is just in the strategic forces. In addition, we have over 500 airplanes in Europe and over 700 airplanes on aircraft carriers. Starting in 1979 we are going to get at least 240 new missiles on submarines -- the so-called Trident submarine.

Teng: Aren't you violating the treaty?

Kissinger: No. I will explain the treaty in a minute. And at least 250 new bombers, the B-1. But the number 240 and 250 are only planning numbers. Once we begin producing, we can produce as many as we want.

Now of those missiles, the only ones that will eventually become vulnerable to attack are the 1,000 land-based ones. This cannot happen before 1982. I'll explain to you why in a minute. And before that can happen we will be producing the Trident missile which will be in serial production by 1979. And we don't have to put it on a submarine; we can put it on land if we want to.

So the Soviet Union would have to be insane to attack 1,000 missiles when we would have 1,500 and more left over even if they destroy all the land-based missiles -- which they also couldn't do.

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Teng: So for either side to use nuclear weapons against the other, it is a matter for great care by both sides.

Kissinger: That is without question. I was answering the question about the Soviet Union being able to make a first strike. My argument is that that is impossible.

Let's look at the reverse. The US has about 30% in land-based missiles, the rest either at sea or on airplanes. I would also like to tell you, we are planning to put long-range missiles into our airplanes -- something the Soviet Union cannot do because they don't have airplanes large enough to do that. The Soviet Union has 85% of its force in land-based missiles. And its sea-based missiles, up to now, are very poor. And it has only 120 airplanes that can reach the U.S., and we don't think they are very well trained. In fact, under the agreement they have to reduce their numbers. They can compose their forces any way they want -- but the level we have agreed on is 2,400 for both sides. It is below their level and above ours -- if you don't count overseas weapons. So they will have to reduce their forces. We think they will get rid of their airplanes, but we don't know.

Teng: But they will not violate the agreement when they improve qualitatively.

Kissinger: Yes, but neither will we.

Teng: So you still have your race then.

Kissinger: But we have planned our forces for the 1980's and they have planned their forces for the '70's. By the early 1980's, both land-based forces will be vulnerable. And 85% of theirs are land-based while only 35% of ours are land-based. Secondly, they are making all their improvements in the most vulnerable forces, namely in the land-based forces. We are making ours in the sea-based and air-based forces -- which are not vulnerable, or much less vulnerable. For example, on their submarines, they have not begun to test a multiple warhead -- which means they could not possibly get it before 1980 into production. Which means, in turn, we will be, in accuracy and technical procedures, 10 to 15 years ahead of them.

Teng: We are in favor of your maintaining a superiority against the Soviet Union in such aspects.

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Kissinger: And I repeat that if we launched a first strike against them we could use overseas forces which are added to the strategic forces that I gave you.

Teng: I thought what we were exploring today was the position of nuclear and conventional weapons.

Kissinger: I just wanted to answer the Foreign Minister's statement that they could first attack us. But it is true that it is more difficult to use nuclear weapons today than 15 years ago. This is without question true.

Ch'iao: What I was saying was this: At present if the Soviet Union should launch an attack with conventional weapons on not necessarily a large scale, on a medium scale, for you to use nuclear weapons under those circumstances would be a difficult thing to make up your minds about.

Kissinger: It is more difficult now than 10 to 15 years ago. It depends on where the attack takes place.

Chiao: As we discussed in New York, if there are changes in Yugoslavia -- they need not make a direct attack, but if they incite pro-Soviet elements to bring in the Soviet armed forces -- what would you do?

Kissinger: Yugoslavia? I went to Yugoslavia after our talk and talked to Marshall Tito and his colleagues about exactly this problem. For one thing, we will begin selling military equipment to Yugoslavia next year. We are now studying what to do in such a case. We will not let it happen unchallenged. It will not be like Czechoslovakia or Hungary. We have not yet decided on the precise measures. But we believe that if the Soviet army is permitted to move outside its sphere, it will create appetites that might not stop. This is why we reacted so violently when they mobilized their airborne divisions during the Middle East crisis. Because it was our judgment that once permitted to operate far from their territory in foreign wars, not in internal quarrels, there would be no end to their appetites.

Teng: In our opinion, not only the Middle East is explosive but also the Balkan Peninsula. And this is an old strategy of the Czar.

Kissinger: For your information, if there is a European Security Conference in the spring, which is, as you know, something we have never wanted, if the President attends, he plans to stop in Bucharest and Belgrade to help make clear the American interest in the independence of these two countries. But we have not announced this, obviously.

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Teng: We have no reason to be in disagreement.

Kissinger: It was no accident that on my recent trip that I stopped in Afghanistan, Yugoslavia and Romania, and made speeches in each about an independent foreign policy.

Teng: So we have been exploring some strategic issues today.

Kissinger: Yes.

Teng: Do you have anything else you want to discuss in this group?

Kissinger: No.

Teng: So, maybe after a short rest, do you want to bring in the others?

Kissinger: Yes.

[The meeting recessed at 11:32 a.m. and then reconvened in a larger group at 11:40.]

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